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ABSTRACT

A study examined the 1972-73 employment of 535 female 1965 and 1966 high school graduates in non-metropolitan Washington. Findings revealed that although there were fewer job opportunities in rural areas, there appeared to be little difference between women working full- or part-time, their level of earnings, or job satisfaction when geographic location was the intervening variable. Data for the study were collected through use of a mail survey. Results of the study indicate that although the more populous places have more employment available, the relative proportion of women working full or part-time, job satisfaction, and earnings was quite similar across all community sizes. Three-fifths of the sample were employed, and three-fourths of those were employed full-time. Less than half of those on farms or rural areas were employed as compared to two-thirds in large cities. Full-time homemaking appears to be an acceptable alternative for women in non-metropolitan areas, since women in this role experienced considerable job satisfaction. However, a comparison with a sample of older women is recommended before conclusions are drawn regarding full-time homemaking as a first choice for career-oriented women. (MEK)

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POPULATION DISPERSAL: WHAT'S IN IT FOR CAREER-ORIENTED WOMEN?

by Donald A. West and Dorothy Z. Price*

The trend toward population dispersal in the United States has become increasingly evident in the past three years. This settlement pattern has emerged slowly but on a large scale and may build stresses that will emerge as national issues (Morrison, p. 1). The trend runs counter to the large rural-to-urban migration which prevailed in the U.S. from World War II through the 1960's. It is now manifest in the beginning of population growth in some nonmetropolitan regions.[1/] During the 1970-73 period, nonmetropolitan regions grew 4.2% in population as compared to only 2.9% for metropolitan areas (Beale, p. 1).

The decentralization trend in manufacturing has been a factor in reviewing population growth in rural areas, although such growth has not been restricted to areas heavily dependent on manufacturing (Beale, p. 9). Growth of jobs in the trade and service sectors of the economy has also been important (Gray and West). Noneconomic factors such as search for recreational opportunities and other amenities have also influenced the population growth patterns (Beale, p. 10). Some people attracted to nonmetropolitan areas by the amenities have made tradeoffs either accepting less remunerative positions or, especially among women, shifting out of the labor force voluntarily.

The scope and impact of the population reversal on nonmetropolitan communities is difficult to predict, partially because the causes of the changes in population

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[1]The terms "nonmetropolitan" and "rural" appear frequently throughout the text. The standard Census of Population definitions apply where nonmetropolitan refers, in general, to any region with less than 50,000 inhabitants and "rural" refers to any location with less than 2,500 inhabitants.

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growth are not well developed on a theoretical basis (Wardwell). Consequently, discussion of the potential impacts of the reversal and, in particular, the implications for job opportunities for women must be based on the assumption that present trends will continue. This paper reports research which examined employment in the 1972-73 period among young women who graduated from high schools in nonmetropolitan Washington. Participation in the labor force, earnings and job satisfaction are compared across localities classified by population size. From these comparisons, inferences are drawn as to the type and availability of jobs that women might expect to find in nonmetropolitan regions.

Women and Labor Force Participation

Women have a number of characteristics which distinguish their labor force participation from that of men. One is that married women are less likely to participate than those who are single (Parnes, et al. pp. 75-79). Secondly, earnings of many women are supplemental to those of males in the household and their options for not working or working only part-time are greater. Work skills or work capacities of women are often underutilized whether by self-imposed conditions for employment or lack of available job opportunities. Additionally, there is the question of job satisfaction, i.e., whether or not jobs for women are sufficiently rewarding in either monetary or psychological terms. The more rewarding the job, the more likely they are to seek and retain positions of employment.

Job satisfaction is an important and complex matter among women (and men) and requires some additional discussion. Human needs are seen as universal and fall into a hierarchy. This hierarchy contains five levels of need which ranging from lowest to highest are: physiological or basic creature comfort;

security, safety and order; love and belongingness; self-esteem or ego-status; and self-actualization or self-fulfillment. Individuals are motivated to seek satisfaction of the highest need not yet met. An environment which encourages satisfaction of this need and subsequently of higher needs will prove generally to be the most stimulating and satisfying. The highest level of need, self-actualization, is never completely fulfilled.

The three lower levels of needs are seen as potential sources of dissatisfaction on the job rather than sources of satisfaction. When basic creature comforts are predominant, they are reflected by concern for pleasant working conditions, more leisure time and personal property, increased salary and avoidance of physical discomfort. Concern with safety and order needs focuses attention on issues of security, predictability and protective rules and regulations. When belongingness needs are strong, there is concern for friendly colleagues, interaction with others, and harmonious interpersonal relations.

Individuals stressing higher needs are more concerned with work motives. Ego-status needs lead persons to seek opportunities to display competence in hopes of achieving social and professional recognition. They look for opportunities for advancement and job assignments which allow them to display their skills. A prevalent self-actualization need level indicates a striving for innovation and creative activities, greater ego-involvement, and increased investment of self in one's work. They seek challenging, meaningful work where a person can gain a sense of personal growth, achievement and satisfaction.

Within the needs framework and in a context where the woman is generally viewed as a secondary earner, several assumptions can be made in regard to important elements of job satisfaction. In a family where the husband is unemployed or has a low income, the concern is with providing basic necessities and an element

of security. Income is a prime motivator for the wife to work and the higher the income, the more satisfaction the job would be expected to hold. Other negative aspects of the job would be given a lesser weight. In these situations, there is danger of exploitation. Women may be willing to accept jobs where salaries are unduly low because their physiological and security needs are so basic.

In families where the husband's income is viewed as adequate, a different pattern of job satisfaction is likely to prevail. Since basic needs are likely met, the woman is free to seek a job where she can contribute her real abilities and construct her own working environment. If the job does not provide inner satisfaction, however, she may leave or demand a higher income. The demand for income in this case is a substitute for satisfying needs for self-esteem and self-actualization.

Methods and Procedures

The data were collected through a mail survey of 1965 and 1966 graduates of high schools in nonmetropolitan Washington. The nonmetropolitan area of the state as defined by the 1960 Census of Population included all counties except King, Snohomish, Pierce, Clark and Spokane. From the nearly 200 nonmetropolitan school districts in the state, 48 were asked to supply names and addresses of 1965-1966 members of graduating classes. Twenty-two districts, geographically dispersed throughout the state, provided address lists from which names were randomly selected. Questionnaires were sent to these persons during the 1972-73 winter and mail follow-up procedures continued into the following spring. Among the 1,754 persons contacted, usable questionnaires were completed by 524 males and 535 females. The female portion of the sample constitutes the data base for this report. The approximate range of ages for the young women when surveyed was 24-27 years.

In the analysis, size of place lived or worked was classified into six categories according to population density. These were farm, rural nonfarm, small towns--less than 2,500 residents, large towns--2,500 to 10,000 residents, small cities--10,000 to 50,000 residents, and large cities--50,000 or more residents. The large cities form metropolitan areas and the other five categories constitute nonmetropolitan areas.

When surveyed, about three-fifths of the young women were employed in one of the 11 major occupations defined by the Bureau of the Census (Table 1).[2/] Among those employed, approximately three-fourths were full-time workers and the remainder were part-time workers. The other women in the sample were primarily full-time homemakers or students. Only about 2 percent of the group were unemployed. Earnings of those employed were recorded and mean earnings were calculated by size of place worked (Table 3).

Job satisfaction was measured by an extensive set of indirect questions. The responses were used to assign index numbers to need levels desired and need levels attained across the five categories. The differences between level desired and level attained indicate the extent to which a worker was dissatisfied with her job. The greater the difference, the greater the dissatisfaction experienced.

Results

The employment status of the young women varied considerably by size of place lived (Table 1). Less than half of those living on farms or in rural nonfarm areas were employed (in an income earning sense) as compared to employment of over two-thirds of those living in large cities. Conversely, over

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[2]These eleven major categories range from professional and kindred workers to private household workers. See West and Hoppe, p. 4, for details.

TABLE 1: EMPLOYMENT STATUS BY SIZE OF PLACE LIVED AMONG YOUNG WOMEN GRADUATING IN 1965 AND 1966 FROM NONMETROPOLITAN HIGH SCHOOLS IN WASHINGTON

Employment Status	Size of Place Lived							
	Farm	Rural Nonfarm	Small Town <2,500	Large Town 2,500-10,000	Small City 10,000-50,000	Total Nonmetro-politan	Large City >50,000	Total
	Percentage Distribution							
Employed	43.9	45.8	51.5	67.8	59.2	57.3	68.9	60.2
Unemployed	4.9	0.0	4.5	2.5	0.8	2.2	0.7	1.9
Full Time Homemaker, By Choice	43.9	43.7	39.4	25.4	29.2	33.0	24.4	30.9
Full Time Homemaker, No Other Work Available	4.9	6.3	3.0	3.4	5.4	4.5	0.7	3.5
Student	2.4	4.2	1.5	0.8	5.4	3.0	5.2	3.5
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of Observations	41	48	66	117	129	401	134	535

Test of Independence: $X^2 = 35.31$ $p < .025$ d.f. = 20

two-fifths of the women living in rural areas were full-time homemakers while only one-fourth of those in large cities chose this type of full-time activity. About 5 percent of the women in the nonmetropolitan areas indicated they were full-time homemakers. Less than 1 percent of those in the large cities were in this position. The percentages of those unemployed, while low in all cases, were higher in the nonmetropolitan areas.

The distribution of the young women by employment status across places of different size indicates that positions of employment are more prevalent in places with large populations than in rural areas. The relationship between percentage employed and population of the place lived is direct although the differences among the large towns and small and large cities are not great. The dominant proportion of women not employed were full-time homemakers and most indicated that they adopted this role by choice. Married women in this 24-27 years age bracket are more likely to have small children in the home, thus providing some rationale for their choice. However, the considerably larger proportions of full-time homemakers in the rural locations suggests that opportunities for employment in these areas are more limited than those in larger towns and cities.

The distribution of the working women among full-time and part-time employment and their local residence pattern is shown by size of place worked in Table 2. The relative proportions of full-time and part-time workers are quite similar across all sizes of place worked. A possible exception, but one that suffers from lack of a sufficient number of observations, is found among women working on farms. The three respondents in this category all considered themselves to be full-time workers although, as shown in Table 3, none reported any earnings from this activity.

The local residence pattern of the employed women appears in the three right-hand columns of Table 2. Among the 322 who were employed, 140 or about

TABLE 2: TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT AND LOCAL RESIDENCE BY SIZE OF PLACE WORKED AMONG EMPLOYED YOUNG WOMEN GRADUATING FROM NONMETROPOLITAN HIGH SCHOOLS IN WASHINGTON

Size of Place Worked	Employed Workers			Local Residence		Percent Living in Same Size of Place Where Working
	Full-Time Workers	Part-Time Workers	All Workers	Living in Same Place Where Working	Living in Different Place from Where Working	
	Percentage Distribution					
Farm	1.3	0.0	0.9	0.7	1.1	100.0
Rural Nonfarm	2.5	2.9	2.5	3.6	1.6	75.0
Small Town, <2,500	11.0	15.9	10.9	10.7	11.0	74.3
Large Town, 2,500-10,000	25.8	29.0	28.0	30.0	26.4	75.6
Small City, 10,000-50,000	25.8	21.7	24.8	25.7	24.2	80.0
Total Nonmetropolitan	65.3	69.6	67.1	70.7	64.3	77.3
Large City >50,000	34.7	30.4	32.9	29.3	35.7	79.2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	
Number of Observations	249	73	322	140	182	

two-fifths lived in the same place where they worked. The remainder commuted from other places of various size. However, about three-fourths of all workers lived in the same size of place as that where they worked.

While the employment status of the women in our sample varied significantly with size of place, the same is not true for the earnings of employed women. The results presented in Table 3 indicate that the average levels of earnings for both full-time and part-time workers are similar across all sizes of place worked. Annual earnings of $10,000 or more occurred only among women employed in large towns or cities. However, average earnings for all women employed in these places differed little from the averages for women employed in small towns or other rural areas.

When interpreting the results for earnings, one must keep in mind the age range for the sample. Lifetime earnings differentials not apparent among relatively young workers may emerge as the group grows older. This happens because workers in occupations such as professionals encounter long periods of training before they enter the labor force. These workers, usually in the higher-paying occupations, typically attain their peak earnings later in life than workers in blue collar or service occupations.[3] The effect is less pronounced among women than among men, however.

The final realtionship examined is that between job satisfaction and place of work. These two factors are jointly linked to occupation in the analysis since job satisfaction reflects one's working environment and occupation is a convenient variable for classifying type of work. The percentage distribution in Table 4 indicates that occupation is significantly related to place of work. The proportions of white collar workers--professional workers, managers, clerical

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[3] See West and Hoppe, pp. 10-11, for additional discussion.

TABLE 3: EARNINGS OF FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME WORKERS BY PLACE OF WORK AMONG YOUNG WOMEN GRADUATING FROM NONMETROPOLITAN HIGH SCHOOLS IN WASHINGTON

Place of Work	Earnings $0-3,999	$4,000-6,999	$7,000-9,999	$10,000 & over	Percent of total	Mean Earnings
FULL-TIME WORKERS						
Nonmetropolitan areas						
Farm	0	0	0	0	0	$ ----
Rural non farm	2	2	4	0	3	6,667
Small town, <2,000	11	11	13	0	11	6,080
Large town, 2,500-10,000	30	21	32	12	26	6,008
Small city, 10,000-50,000	20	29	23	41	26	6,906
Metropolitan areas						
Large city, >50,000	37	37	28	47	35	6,289
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	
No. of Observations	54	94	71	17	236[a]	
PART-TIME WORKERS						
Nonmetropolitan areas						
Farm	0	0	0	-	0	$ ----
Rural nonfarm	4	0	0	-	3	500
Small town, <2,000	20	7	0	-	16	2,636
Large town, 2,500-10,000	29	27	40	-	29	2,925
Small city, 10,000-50,000	20	20	40	-	22	3,533
Metropolitan areas						
Large city, >50,000	27	47	20	-	30	3,500
Total %	100	100	100	-	100	
No. of Observations	49	15	5	0	69[a]	

Test of Independence: $X^2 = 13.194$, nonsignificant df = 15

[a]Totals exclude 17 females not reporting both place of work and earnings.

TABLE 4: PLACE OF WORK AND JOB SATISFACTION BY OCCUPATION AMONG YOUNG WOMEN GRADUATING FROM NONMETROPOLITAN HIGH SCHOOLS IN WASHINGTON

Place of Work	Occupation							
	Professional	Manager	Clerical	Sales	Service	Homemaker[a]	Student[a]	Total
	Percentage of Workers							
Farm	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.8	5.3	4.4
Rural nonfarm	5.6	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	13.0	10.5	7.0
Small Town, <2,500	18.5	0.0	6.8	0.0	10.3	15.1	5.3	12.7
Large Town, 2,500-10,000	28.7	0.0	23.9	44.0	34.5	18.4	5.3	22.8
Small City, 10,000-50,000	15.7	33.3	30.8	22.0	34.5	24.3	36.8	25.0
Total Nonmetropolitan	68.5	33.3	62.4	66.0	79.3	81.6	63.2	71.9
Large City, >50,000	31.5	66.7	37.6	44.0	20.7	18.4	36.8	28.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
No. of Observations	208	6	117	9	29	185	19	473
NEED LEVELS	Mean Differences Between Need Levels Desired and Attained							Differences Significant Among Means[d]
Basic Creature Comforts	...[b]	...	...	0.0 (2.83)	...	...	...	...
Security	...	0.33 (3.79)	0.30 (2.50)	1.75 (1.50)	1.32 (3.07)	0.12 (2.65)	0.11 (2.65)	No
Belongingness	0.39 (2.10)	1.50 (2.59)	0.24 (2.49)	1.00 (2.38)	0.41 (2.81)	...	0.19 (2.40)	No
Self-Esteem	0.76 (2.78)	3.20 (2.49)	1.73 (3.25)	1.17 (3.55)	2.62 (3.75)	1.15 (2.89)	1.12 (3.12)	Yes
Self-Actualization	1.81 (2.60)	4.00 (2.16)	1.38 (3.34)	4.33 (4.54)	1.85 (3.08)	1.05 (2.86)	1.50 (2.62)	Yes

Test of Independence: $X^2 = 94.18$ $p < .005$ d.f. = 30 (Place of work x occupation)

[a]Students and full-time homemakers are assumed to work where they live.

[b]Differences of less than zero indicate levels attained exceed those desired. These differences are not recorded.

[c]The figures in parentheses are standard errors.

[d]Significant at the 10% level. The test is based on the F-statistic. See Dixon and Massey, pp. 145-152, for details.

and sales workers--are relatively higher in metropolitan areas while those for service workers and homemakers are more predominant in the nonmetropolitan areas.

The job satisfaction indicators in the lower part of Table 4 are mean differences between need levels desired and those attained. The smaller values indicate a relatively higher degree of satisfaction with one's job while the larger values indicate dissatisfaction with the job was present. In the area of job environment, i.e., the lower need levels in the hierarchy--basic creature comforts, security and belongingness, the values indicate that the young women are reasonably satisfied with their work. These results suggest that working conditions were generally acceptable to most members of the sample. The absence of any significant differences among means for the occupational categories suggests that job environments in both the nonmetropolitan and metropolitan regions were generally satisfying.

In the area of work motivation as measured by mean differences for the higher needs levels, self-esteem and self-actualization, dissatisfaction was evident. The greatest amounts occurred among managers and service workers. At the self-actualization level, job dissatisfaction was more prevalent among managers and sales workers. Full-time homemakers were clearly the most satisfied with their working conditions.

Although significant differences exist among the means for self-esteem and self-actualization, it is difficult to identify any pattern closely related to place of work. The young women managers were employed in cities and were the most dissatisfied with their jobs, but the number of observations in this category is too small to draw any meaningful conclusions. On the other hand service workers, who were more heavily distributed toward nonmetropolitan areas, also experienced considerable dissatisfaction with their jobs. This evidence

suggests that job satisfaction is more related to occupation than to the place where the young women worked.

Implications:

Assuming population dispersal continues, career-oriented women who settle in less densely populated areas may find job opportunities more limited than they are in metropolitan areas. These limited opportunities may be the major disadvantage, however. In the areas of full-time versus part-time work, level of earnings and job satisfaction, there appears to be little difference between nonmetropolitan and metropolitan regions for the young women studied.

The results of the study should be viewed in terms of the relative advantages and disadvantages of nonmetropolitan versus metropolitan locations. Persons who move geographically often make tradeoffs, gaining benefits in some areas and incurring costs in others. Individuals or households who move to nonmetropolitan areas frequently gain in terms of environment, amenities and other noneconomic factors. However, career-oriented women making such moves should realize that they may find fewer job opportunities in their new locations.

Full-time homemaking appears to be an acceptable alternative for women in nonmetropolitan areas, since women in this role experienced considerable job satisfaction. However, the age of the sample should be kep in mind. Sociological studies indicate a woman is more satisfied with the homemaker role in the early years of marriage and motherhood. Consequently, comparison with an older sample of women would provide a more complete indication of full-time homemaking as the first choice for many career-oriented women.

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TABLE 5: ANNUAL EARNINGS OF YOUNG MALES GRADUATING IN 1965 AND 1966 FROM HIGH SCHOOLS IN NONMETROPOLITAN AREAS BY PLACE OF WORK

(PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION)

PLACE OF WORK	EARNINGS $0-3,999	$4,000-6,999	$7,000-9,999	$10,000 & OVER	PERCENT OF TOTAL	MEAN EARNINGS
NONMETROPOLITAN AREAS						
FARM	11	10	2	8	7	$6,614
RURAL NONFARM	17	10	11	10	11	6,796
SMALL TOWN, <2,500	17	11	14	10	13	6,796
LARGE TOWN, 2,500-10,000	24	28	24	22	25	7,224
SMALL CITY, 10,000-50,000	10	13	28	29	22	8,295
METROPOLITAN AREAS						
LARGE CITY, >50,000	21	23	21	21	22	7,005
TOTAL %	100	100	100	100	100	
NUMBER OF OBSERVATIONS	81	160	147	78	466[a]	

[a] TOTALS EXCLUDE 60 MALES NOT REPORTING BOTH PLACE OF WORK AND EARNINGS.

TABLE 6: JOB DISSATISFACTION AMONG YOUNG MEN GRADUATING IN 1965 AND 1966 FROM HIGH SCHOOLS IN NONMETROPOLITAN WASHINGTON BY OCCUPATION

(MEAN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN NEED LEVELS DESIRED AND ATTAINED)

OCCUPATION	NEED LEVELS: BASIC CREATURE COMFORTS	SECURITY	BELONGINGNESS	SELF-ESTEEM	SELF-ACTUALIZATIONS	NO. OF OBSERVATIONS
PROFESSIONAL	-[a]	-	0.01 (2.30)	1.82 (3.32)	1.62 (2.70)	98
FARMER	-	-	-	-	0.47 (2.26)	17
MANAGER	-	0.70 (2.69)	-	1.13 (3.08)	1.56 (3.15)	33
CLERICAL	-	1.50 (1.20)	1.13 (2.59)	3.38 (2.33)	3.43 (2.76)	8
SALES	-	0.93 (2.75)	0.13 (2.33)	1.70 (3.10)	1.38 (2.90)	31
CRAFTSMEN	-	0.66 (2.86)	-	1.90 (2.90)	1.22 (2.78)	65
OPERATIVE	-	1.61 (2.24)	-	2.58 (3.18)	2.60 (3.35)	45
SERVICE	-	0.45 (2.64)	-	1.14 (3.19)	1.25 (2.93)	35
FARM LABORER	-	-	-	1.88 (3.40)	1.29 (4.57)	10
LABORER	-	2.00 (2.77)	0.22 (2.85)	2.66 (2.79)	2.71 (3.34)	41
HOMEMAKER	...[b]	...	...	...	...	
ARMED FORCES	-	-	-	2.88 (3.06)	3.71 (4.01)	19
STUDENT	-	1.25 (2.95)	0.30 (1.75)	2.73 (2.21)	3.75 (4.02)	24
UNEMPLOYED	-	1.90 (2.60)	-	2.33 (2.31)	5.75 (3.05)	12
SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES AMONG MEANS		No	No	No	Yes*[c]	

[a] MEANS OF LESS THAN ZERO INDICATE NEED LEVELS ATTAINED EXCEED THOSE DESIRED. THESE MEANS ARE NOT RECORDED.

[b] MEANS ARE NOT RECORDED WHERE THE NUMBER OF OBSERVATIONS IS LESS THAN FIVE.

[c] * IMPLIES SIGNIFICANCE AT THE 10% LEVEL. THE TEST IS BASED UPON THE F-STATISTIC. SEE DIXON, WILFRED J. AND FRANK J. MASSEY, INTRODUCTION TO STATISTICAL ANALYSIS, NEW YORK: MCGRAW HILL BOOK CO., PP. 145-152 FOR DETAILS.